

# Brussels blog round up for 14 – 20 July: EU funded research to become open access, Sicily on the verge of bankruptcy, and who really runs the EU?

Jul 20 2012

**Chris Gilson** and **Stuart A Brown** take a look at the week in Brussels blogging.

## The EU Centre

*EU Logos* at Blogactiv.eu praises a new directive signed last week by the Parliament and the Council guaranteeing [rights to victims of crime](#) within the EU. The agreement ensures that victims will have access to support measures, such as free counselling services, across all EU member states. At Blogactiv.eu, *Sonia Alfano* argues for greater EU protection of the fundamental [rights of migrants](#).

*Neelie Kroes*, Vice-President of the European Commission, details the European Commission's plans to make all EU funded research available under [open access](#), and will be formally recommending that EU member states do the same. She says: "sharing and cooperation are essential to science". The *EU Energy Policy Blog* says that wind power is having a [mid-life crisis](#), with diminishing returns and costs slowly rising.

*Martinned* examines the possibility of a '[West Lothian' question developing in EU politics](#), with MEPs from one country having the potential to vote on issues which only impact upon other member states. He argues that "it is preferable if MEPs from outside the Schengen-area or the Eurozone do not vote on legislation that affects only those Member States".

*Craig Willy* explores the fundamental question, of [who really runs the EU](#)? He reckons the pecking order is as follows:

1. European Council (member states)
2. (Eurozone: Core states)
3. European Central Bank
4. (Eurozone: Peripheral states)
5. European Commission
6. European Parliament

## EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

On Sunday, the Red Cross declared that the situation in Syrian now constitutes a "civil war". *Debating Europe* gauges opinion on how the EU should [respond to the conflict](#). Meanwhile, *European Geostrategy* says that a new European security strategy is [not needed](#), as previous threats have not changed, and many previous strategic recommendations from 2003 to 2008 have still not been implemented.

## The Euro Crisis

The Spanish government's announcement of [new €65 million austerity measures](#) has received a lukewarm response, as *Open Europe* details. Michele Boldrin at *Nada es Gratis* writes that while austerity is a necessary temporary measure for [Spain's economy](#), it only serves to 'calm the fever' and risks 'killing the patient' before the real disease of low growth can be tackled. The *European Council on Foreign Relations* says that while the EU has still not taken over the direct running of the Spanish economy, Spain's democracy has been compromised – a [collective failure](#) by the country's government and leaders.

*Lost in EUrope* says that the implementation of the Eurozone rescue package is reminiscent of ['Waiting for Godot'](#), as it still must be approved by the German Federal Constitutional Court, which now will not be until September. *FinancialGuy* at Blogactiv.eu says that this two month wait is [forever](#), at least in terms of the Eurozone crisis.

## Across Europe

*Nosemonkey's EUtopia* has criticised William Hague's planned [audit of EU law](#) on the grounds that the true impact of EU legislation is impossible to determine. Meanwhile, the *Centre for European Reform* questions whether the UK is capable of [negotiating opt-outs](#) from EU legislation given that it cannot guarantee support from other member-states. They conclude by arguing that: "nothing has hurt Britain's image in the EU more than the perception that London is failing to help to end the crisis and – worse – that the UK is taking advantage of others' woes".

*Marek Siwiek MEP*, writing at Blogactiv.eu looks at the current situation in [Romania](#), where Prime Minister Victor Ponta has moved to impeach the democratically elected President Traian Basescu. Unless Prime Minister Victor Ponta halts his attacks on democracy, 'his country can say goodbye to the Schengen accession'. However, *Lost in EUrope* says that the EU is only now [waking up](#) to the problems in Romania.

*A Fistful of Euros* assesses the fragile situation in [Portugal](#), detailing the unique problems faced by the country in returning to economic growth and increasing international competitiveness. Meanwhile, *Open Europe* writes that the regional government of [Sicily is now on the verge of bankruptcy](#), adding to Italy's growing list of problems.

Emiliano Alessandri at the *GMF Blog* looks at the [diverging fortunes of Greece and Turkey](#), taking issue with the notion that Greece has been damaged by its membership of the EU in comparison to its neighbour. He concludes that Greece's failures may have been worse without EU membership and that "as counterintuitive as it may seem at a time of Turkey's rise and the EU's decline, the so-called New Turkey remains an experiment that requires Europe for its fulfilment".

Meanwhile, *Karpfenteich* at Blogactiv.eu looks at a proposed [tax treaty](#) between Germany and Switzerland, which is now 'dead in the water' because of large gaps that make tax evasion still possible.

## And finally...

While London prepares for the Olympics, Hungary has been hosting its own games: the [Computer Olympiad](#). As Google's *European Public Policy Blog* describes, competitors from across the world have been competing for medals in events ranging from efficient algorithm building, to competitive programming. Unlike London, there have been no reported problems with security contracts or ticket sales.

*PolsciEU* looks at how YouTube clicks can be [bought](#), saying that faking interest is an insult to those who make these videos.



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*Nada es Gratis* looks at the importance of [language skills in economic issues](#), saying that knowing other languages can increase wages and labour productivity as well as increasing a country's export capacity.

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of EUROPPE – European Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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